

# OPERA AMERICA

## Next Stage Grants

**Generously Funded by Gene Kaufman, Terry Eder-Kaufman,  
and New Vision for Opera**

**With Additional Support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**

## **2020 Grant Guidelines and Application Procedures**

### **Important Dates**

- **Application available online:** July 2020
- **Letter of intent deadline:** August 25, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. ET
- **Application deadline:** October 1, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. ET
- **Adjudication:** November 2020
- **Grantees notified:** December 2020
- **Grant Period:** July 1, 2021 – December 31, 2022

OPERA America  
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# Next Stage Grants

## 2020 Guidelines and Application Procedures

OPERA America has long been committed to increasing the quantity and quality of new American operas, granting nearly \$20 million to the opera field to support the work of opera creators, companies, and administrators. Next Stage Grants provide financial support to OPERA America Professional Company Members and their producing partners for subsequent productions of existing, under-performed North American works.

### Goals

The goals of the program are to:

- Encourage opera companies to program recent or neglected works;
- Build support for the necessity and viability of presenting subsequent productions in the opera field; and
- Increase knowledge of the growing American repertoire.

### Supported Activities

Next Stage Grants cover selected costs incurred by originating a new production of an existing work that incorporates new physical production elements (production grants), or presenting performances of an existing production with all or most of the score and text, original production elements, and production team intact, although the cast may be modified (presentation grants). Additional support is available for substantive revisions to the score, text, and/or orchestration with the engagement of the composers and librettists.

### Eligibility

#### Production

- The grant-funded activities may not commence before July 1, 2021.
- The production must be scheduled to commence no later than December 31, 2022.
- Works eligible for subsequent production support must have received a full production at a Professional Company Member.
- For this grant, OPERA America defines “new American works” as those written by a creative team in which either the composer or librettist has U.S. citizenship or permanent residency. The participation of the creators in the subsequent production is not required, provided the rights to produce the work have been secured. The rights must be secured before any grant will be awarded. Companies are encouraged to involve the creators of the work in as many appropriate ways as possible.
- Works previously produced by an applicant company are eligible for new production grants only.
- Next Stage Grants do not fund lab productions, workshops, readings, or working performances.

#### Applicants

- The lead applicant must be a Professional Company Member of OPERA America. International and Associate members of OPERA America may participate as consortium members but are not eligible to submit applications directly. The majority of partner organizations must be based in North America.
- Applications will be advanced for consideration only if applicant companies are current in membership dues, the submission of required surveys (including the Professional Opera Survey), and the submission of reports from prior grants.
- The lead applicant must be actively involved with the production and be committed to a production of the work.

- If awarded, the lead applicant will serve as the fiscal agent and disburse all funds received and provide all required financial and narrative documentation to OPERA America.
- Applicants must have OPERA America’s logo, including a hyperlink to the OPERA America website, in a prominent location on their websites.

## **Funding Parameters**

- **Grant range:**
  - **Up to \$75,000 for production consortium support**
  - **Up to \$50,000 for production sole applicant support**
  - **Up to \$25,000 for presentation support (sole applicant only)**
- The size of an individual grant varies according to the project’s total costs as defined in the preliminary budget, the number of members in the consortium (if applicable), and the amount of funds available at the time of adjudication. OPERA America intends to grant awards large enough to contribute substantially to the cost of a project.
- Grants cover up to 50 percent of eligible expenses since a contribution from the company demonstrates its commitment to the activity. Eligible costs include actual cash expenditures and in-kind contributions.
  - In-kind contributions are verifiable services and materials donated by individuals or organizations other than the applicant and its consortium partners. A reasonable amount of the budget may be attributed to in-kind revenue and expense; in cases where more than 25 percent of the total budget is in-kind, additional documentation may be requested.
- No fee or salary support is available for employees or board members of the applying organization or individuals related to them.
- Only coach-class airfare will be covered by grants for applications requesting air transportation.
- A company may only submit one grant application in a single category.

## **Description of Grants Available**

There are two types of grants:

### **Production Grants**

- A new physical production of an existing work. Eligible costs may include:
  - Fees to designers; and
  - Set, costume, and prop expenses.

### **Presentation Grants**

- A presentation of an existing production with all or most of the original production elements and production team intact, although the cast may be modified. Eligible costs may include:
  - Set, prop, and costume rentals and/or purchase (including transportation costs)

If the proposed subsequent production includes substantive revisions to the score, text, and/or orchestration, the expenses below may be incorporated in the preliminary budget. This does not change the maximum eligible grant amount:

- Creator fees for revisions or re-orchestration;
- Score copying costs; and
- Extended or additional rehearsal expenses (e.g., extra orchestra services in the rehearsal process, but not workshops).

## How to Apply

- The following timeline is in place for 2020 grants:
  - **Application available online:** July 2020
  - **Letter of intent deadline:** August 25, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. ET
  - **Application deadline:** October 1, 2020, at 11:59 p.m. ET
  - **Adjudication:** November 2020
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  - **Grant Period:** July 1, 2021 – December 31, 2022
- Read these guidelines carefully before completing any application materials.
- Intent to apply forms and applications must be submitted online at [operaamerica.org/GrantsDashboard](https://operaamerica.org/GrantsDashboard).
- No applications will be accepted unless an intent to apply form has been submitted on or before the deadline of August 3, 2020.
- Submit a complete, final application, including all supplementary materials, by September 17, 2020. Applications that are incomplete, late, or sent via mail or email will not be accepted.
- Contact Kristal Pacific, director of social equity and grantmaking, at [KPacific@operaamerica.org](mailto:KPacific@operaamerica.org) with questions.

## Application Review

All final applications for Next Stage Grants are reviewed by an independent panel selected from a pool of experts approved by the Board of Directors of OPERA America. No current board member or employee of OPERA America may serve on any panel. Individuals who stand to benefit from a grant are also ineligible to serve. Each panel represents the diverse disciplines involved in creating and producing new works, as well as artists and individuals with special expertise in interdisciplinary programming and audience development. Panelists are also selected to reflect geographic diversity. The decisions of the panel are final.

The following review criteria are weighed by panels to determine which applications will receive funding and at what level. Applications with compelling musical samples, strong artistic vision, and thoughtful creative statements are more likely to be funded. After considering artistic merit, the panel considers the remaining criteria. Projects eligible for support through Next Stage Grants must meet all criteria (listed in order of importance):

- **Artistic Merit:** The work demonstrates sufficient innate musical and theatrical quality to merit a remounting, new production, or revision. If the work has been substantially revised, this assessment will be made on the basis of the new version.
- **Impact of the Work on the Field and on the Producing Company:**
  - The work is a potentially significant addition to the canon of regularly produced operas;
  - The work is not regularly produced by professional opera companies;
  - The work has the potential to broaden current and potential audiences' appreciation of the art form and new American work; and
  - The production will extend the capacity of the current producer by broadening its repertoire and enhancing its artistic profile.
- **Quality and Distinction in Concept and Planning:** Applications are evaluated on the appropriateness, effectiveness, and thoroughness of the planning process guiding the production of the opera.
- **Robust Partnership/Collaboration:** Where appropriate, applications must communicate the ways project participants have been or will be involved in the design, planning, and realization of the proposed production. In the case of consortia, only applications demonstrating consensus on the creative direction of the project will be considered for grants.
- **Evaluation:** Applications must articulate plans for assessing the results and impact of the production beyond ticket sales and reviews.

- **Organizational Resources:** Applications must convey the degree to which the applicant organization or consortium is able to carry out the proposed project. Managerial and artistic support, staff experience, and financial resources will be considered.

An application is more likely to receive funding when it reflects the commitment of the company's professional leadership to the activity for which support is requested. The company's leadership and other key individuals, including potential consortium members, should be involved in the development of the application. These individuals should be available to OPERA America staff to answer questions about the application.

## **Grant Announcement**

- All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their requests by mail after the panel completes its review.
- All grant letters will contain an end date for the grant period. Money not expended at the end of the grant period will revert to OPERA America unless an extension of the grant period is secured. Requests for extensions must be made in writing.
- Funds may be withheld by OPERA America if a company is not current in its membership dues, the submission of required surveys, and/or the submission of reports from prior grants.
- In general, advances of up to 50 percent of the grant amount will be extended upon request.
- The balance of the grant will be paid upon satisfactory completion of the narrative and financial reporting requirements.
- Next Stage Grants are restricted to the project described in the application. Funds advanced to the grantee by OPERA America must be repaid in the event the approved project is not carried out.
- The following rules apply when a grant is awarded to a consortium:
  - The lead applicant will serve as the fiscal agent and will be responsible for disbursing funds among consortium members as specified in the application.
  - Should a consortium not materialize after a grant has been awarded, the lead applicant may keep its share of the original grant if it completes the project in the manner described in the original application. The applicant company's grant amount, however, cannot exceed the maximum amount allowed for sole applicant support. Monies exceeding this limit must be returned to OPERA America.
- The receipt of a grant at any stage of a project or activity does not guarantee continued support from OPERA America.

## **Reporting Requirements**

Successful applicants will receive an award letter explaining the grant's terms and conditions, including the financial documentation and narrative reporting requirements. These reports will be reviewed by OPERA America staff. All reporting requirements must be completed before the grant will be fully paid.

Grantees are required to acknowledge OPERA America and other funders in the manner described by OPERA America in the award letter. Next Stage Grant recipients must maintain OPERA America's logo, including a hyperlink to OPERA America's website, in a prominent location on their websites. The submission of proof of acknowledgment constitutes an element of the final report of the grant.

Next Stage Grant recipients may be asked to submit additional documentation or cooperate with OPERA America in sharing the results of their projects with the field.

## **Staff Contact Information**

For more information, contact Kristal Pacific, director of social equity and grantmaking, at [KPacific@operaamerica.org](mailto:KPacific@operaamerica.org).